

IX.
*The fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, the true and only
required Basis of Charity and united Christian Effort.*

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

AT PHILADELPHIA, ON THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

American Sunday-School Union.

MAY 17, 1846.

BY THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

146 CHESTNUT STREET.

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1846.

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At a meeting of the American Sunday-school Union, duly convened by public notice, at the Society's house, (146 Chestnut street, Philadelphia,)

AMBROSE WHITE, Esq., in the chair,

It was, on motion,

Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the Rev. Dr. SMYTH, for his sermon preached on the 17th inst., and that a copy be requested for publication.

Att. : J. C. PECHIN, Sec.

A SERMON.

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”—Phil. iii. 15, 16.

THIS exhortation of the apostle is addressed to Christians, since he not only writes to such, but, in the very passage before us, addresses himself to “us, therefore,”—that is, “as many as be perfect.” By “perfect” the apostle does not mean perfection in holiness, since he had but just before declared, that he laboured “not as though he had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

By being “perfect,” therefore, the apostle means being truly Christians, true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and true partakers of his blood, and of all the benefits of his righteousness, his Spirit and his interceding love. True believers *are* “perfect,” because they have imputed to them the perfect righteousness of

Christ ; are perfectly justified ; are under the influence of the all-perfect and sanctifying Spirit ; enjoy the favour and friendship of God, “ who is perfect ;” and are complete and perfect in Christ, through whom they are now justified and made subjects of complete redemption.

True believers, however,—that is, they who are “perfect,”—instead of considering themselves “perfect,” as it regards their *actual attainments*, are required to cherish the same view of their deficiencies which the apostle here expresses, and to recognise their own ignorance, weakness and insufficiency. And not only so, Christians are also to remember that their brethren in the Lord may be “perfect,” and yet be of various minds or opinions as to many things contained in the word of God. Such differences of opinion are to be expected from the various degrees of advancement made in Christian knowledge, and from the different capacity with which the truths of Christianity are contemplated. They are not, therefore, to be looked upon as inconsistent with the character of a perfectly sincere believer in all the *essential* principles of the gospel ; or of an actual partaker of all the *saving* benefits and blessings of that gospel. They are not to militate against the exercise of Christian charity, but are, on the contrary, to constitute the very basis upon which that charity is to be exercised, since charity pre-supposes opinions and practices which require forbearance and mutual toleration. And it is by the exercise of this charity, as the apostle teaches, we may expect that the Spirit of God will lead us to that more perfect unity of sentiment *towards* which we should aspire, and *for* which we should pray. “Nevertheless,” says the apostle, while such differences remain, and are conscientiously held,

“where to we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

From this passage, then, we learn, that with a perfect unity of essential faith there may be a diversity of opinion and of practice ; and that it is the paramount duty of Christians not only to recognise and acknowledge as “brethren in the Lord” all who agree in holding “the truth as it is in Jesus,” but also to co-operate with them in every good word and work, so far as such works can be carried on upon the basis of this essential and mutually acknowledged truth.

Diversities of opinion and of practice *originate* doubtless in human ignorance, weakness and sin ; but they were permitted by an all-wise God to enter into the Christian church at its first beginning, and to become established and perpetuated in the various denominations of Christianity *now*, in order that through the glaring weaknesses and infirmities of its members, there might be made known, through this very divided and distracted church, “the manifold wisdom of God.” Amid this war of elements, and these clouds of man’s wild opinions, the bow of heaven’s truth is seen reflected all the more clearly, as it points, in ethereal brightness, the pathway to holiness and heaven. Amid the wild uproar and confusion of hostile and contending parties, the glory of the great “Captain of our salvation” is the more illustriously displayed as He is seen “making the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining the remainder thereof,” since it is while He goes forth as “the leader and commander” of this disunited people, who amid all their other differences are bound together by a common faith in Him, and love and devotion to his cause, he is evidently demonstrated to be “the Won

derful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." In permitting "the tares to grow up together with the wheat," and "the hay, wood, and stubble," to be built up in connection with "the gold, silver, and precious stones," even while they are destined to be ultimately destroyed, Christ also makes manifest his infinite condescension, forbearance, and pity for the weakness and infirmities of his people, and thus constantly reminds us that even as He loves all, so should all that are loved by Him cherish love one towards another.

And while it is lamentably true that such diversities afford an easy ground for the cavil of the infidel, and the sneer of the scoffer, and constitute "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," over which many fall into perdition, nevertheless it is also true that the way of salvation is so plain that the inquiring pilgrim "though a fool, need not err therein;"—that such diversities of opinion on other matters are therefore obstinately wrested, by those who will not come unto Christ that they may have life, to their own destruction; and that there must therefore now, as well as in the apostle's days, be divisions and diversities among true Christians, that they who are truly sincere, and who truly submit to the guidance of the Spirit of truth, "may be made manifest." In the present state of the church and of the world, these diversities among Christians subserve many valuable ends, while their complete annihilation will constitute the triumph of the cross and the glory of the Omnipotent Spirit, when, under the reign of millennial blessedness, all true Christians shall "see eye to eye," and become, even to the view of men, AS THEY

ALWAYS HAVE BEEN TO THE VIEW OF GOD, "one fold under one Shepherd."

Under present circumstances, mutual charity, forbearance and co-operation in every Christian enterprise, are the great duties which Christians owe to their brethren of other denominations who agree with them in fundamental truth. The obligation to act in this spirit and in this manner is enforced upon us, *first*, by the imperfection of our natural faculties, and the consequent and necessary variety of opinion; *secondly*, by the imperfect state of the church in this world; *thirdly*, by the fact that the want of this spirit and the attempt to enforce a perfect uniformity of belief and practice have invariably resulted in the production of divisions instead of union, of jealousy instead of affection, of hatred instead of love, of a disproportionate and un-Christian zeal for things of minor importance to the comparative neglect of things essential, to the introduction of un-authorized and man-made terms of communion, and to hypocrisy in profession and laxity in practice; and *fourthly*, this obligation is made imperative by the all-powerful argument that it is enforced by apostolic precept and by apostolic practice: "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

I rejoice in the opportunity afforded me, of giving public demonstration of my cordial adherence to these views which I have long cherished, and in which I am more and more confirmed, by growing experience, deeper insight into the word of God, larger knowledge of the

operation of the Spirit in the conversion of souls, fuller observation of the character of other denominations, and by the signs of the times, which, like so many beacons upon the mountain heights, call upon all the scattered soldiers of the cross, to rally to its standard, and to come up, with all their might, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the combined hosts who are now concentrating their forces under the god of this world, and the principalities and powers of earth "against the Lord, and against his anointed." It is true that much of what I have published, in other forms, has been in explanation and defence of the ecclesiastical views of the denomination to which I am attached. But as I look for, and advocate, no uniformity nor incorporation of denominations, but only a unity of sentiment in things essential, and a union of effort in things of common importance and utility, I have regarded my course as contributing to these results. For it is only when the strength, and determination, and conscientious adherence of those who differ from us are made manifest, that we perceive the hopelessness of amalgamation, change, or uniformity; are taught that there will, and there must be diversity; and are thus prepared fully to adopt as our principle and rule, the course prescribed by the apostle in our text. By endeavouring, therefore, to overthrow arrogant and exclusive assumptions, to show how sincerely and scripturally denominational views may be maintained; and that all who hold the Head are required to acknowledge, and to bear with one another in love; I have hoped to contribute my feeble aid towards the diffusion of such a spirit and such a practice.

In furtherance of the same object, I will now show,

first, that there *must* be fundamental truths in Christianity; *secondly*, how these may be distinguished; and *thirdly*, the obligation to make them the basis of Christian charity and Christian effort.

I. In the *first* place, then, we remark that there must be fundamental truths in Christianity, as distinguished from those that are of minor importance. This arises out of the very nature of things. Every system of opinions is described by those views which distinguish it from all others to which it may have a resemblance, and with which it may hold many things in common. So it is with every order, society, and association among men. And so also must it be with Christianity, both as an organization, and as a system of revealed truth. There are, and must be, certain great and fundamental principles by which it is characterized, and essentially distinguished from Paganism, Mohammedanism, and Deism.

Fundamental truths are those which affect the foundation upon which Christianity rests, just as fundamental error is that from which all other errors spring, and which involves the rejection of what is essential to the gospel. Those truths on which Christianity rests, and by which it subsists, are fundamental, since without them the whole building and superstructure must fall. These constitute its laws, its first principles, its axioms, its data; the foundation on which rest its promises, its overtures, and all its blessings; and its essence, without which neither the form nor the substance of Christianity can remain.

“ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration,” and contains what is true and profitable, but there is a great difference in the intrinsic and relative importance of these truths. None can be rejected or denied *when once*

known to be revealed, but all are not absolutely necessary to be known. The knowledge of all is profitable, but “*this* is eternal life, to know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” All are to be believed as far as they are, or may be, known, because they have a bearing upon the confirmation, proof, or illustration of what is essential; but there are some things which are to be believed for their own sake. These constitute “the word of truth, by which we are begotten,”* and “by which we are sanctified;”† “the incorruptible seed of divine truth, which liveth and abideth for ever;”‡ “the word of truth,” and “the gospel of salvation.”§ Some truths, therefore, are useful, but others are essential. Some are chronological, geographical, historical, genealogical, and typical, which we are bound rather not to deny or contradict than positively to understand and remember, to receive implicitly rather than explicitly; but other truths relate to that grace and peace which are multiplied unto us “through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that BY THESE we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”|| There are, in short, truths in the gospel as well as in the law which “are weightier matters,” while others are like “the tithing of mint, anise and cummin;” truths which constitute “the foundation laid in Zion,” the rock on which the church is built, and others

* James i. 18.

† John xvii. 17—19.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 23.

§ Eph. i. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 15; 1 Peter i. 22.

|| 2 Peter i. 2—4.

which are only built thereon, or are necessary, in order to fix our hopes more surely, and more comfortably upon them; some truths which are necessary to the very *being* of a Christian, and others which contribute only to his *well-being*.

It is very important to observe, that as Scripture is an infallible guide to practice as well as to faith, sincere and universal obedience to what God requires is as necessary to salvation as sincere and universal assent to what God reveals. We must "confess with the mouth as well as believe with the heart;" and while "faith justifies," it "works also by love," "purifies the heart," and constrains to obedience and the keeping of all Christ's commandments, so that "faith without such fruits is dead" and "profiteth nothing." But while this obedience, to be sincere, must be universal, so that it will lead us, in all things and at all times, to do what we know to be in accordance with God's will, is there no difference between the relative importance of the things that are to be done, so that while some things are of such a nature, that we cannot be Christians without doing them, others only become necessary from the circumstances in which we may, or may not be placed, and from our knowledge of their requirement by the word and will of God? Most assuredly this will be denied by none; and hence it is equally certain that the same distinction must be made in things to be believed, since in both cases the disposition to obey—to obey the truth, and the precept—must be sincere and universal in order to salvation.

A similar inference may be drawn from a consideration of the various elements of the worship of the Deity, of which, while all are necessary to be rendered as far as

they are known to be ordained, some are essential in their own nature, while others are necessary only because commanded, or requisite for the performance of the others.

The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible, that while all divine revelation is true—and no truth of God, when known, can be rejected consistently with salvation—still all the truths contained in the word of God are not necessary to be known, either for their own sake, or in order to salvation, but are, like the overflowing bounties and beauties of nature, given by the munificence of God, “for our correction, instruction, and reproof,” “that we may be *thoroughly* furnished unto every good work,” and enabled to comprehend and to appreciate more fully “the manifold wisdom of God.”

That only some truths are fundamental, is further evident from the fact, that otherwise no man could be certain of salvation, since no man can be certain that he fully and perfectly understands and remembers all that is revealed in the pages of revelation, in the book of conscience, and in the ample volume of nature. And are not all Christian churches, even those who professedly reject this distinction, unavoidably required practically to adopt it as the basis of their communion, since they admit persons to membership, not on an exhibition of a perfect knowledge of all possible truth, but only of that truth which they deem necessary to a credible profession of “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?”

Be this as it may, the Scriptures clearly and unequivocally recognise this distinction between the truths it reveals. Christians, according to its teaching, may be “perfect,” and yet have differences of opinion on some

points.* They may be “in the faith,” and are, as such, to be “received,” and yet they may be “weak in the faith,” and to be received *as such*, and that, too, “not to doubtful disputations.”† A man, we are assured, may understand and receive the foundation, that is, what is fundamental, and, consequently, be saved, and yet build upon that foundation, opinions which are as the “hay, wood, and stubble,” which shall be destroyed.‡ There is what is called “the gospel,” “the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “the doctrine that is according to godliness,” to teach otherwise than which is to be “proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings.”§ There are errors which “frustrate the grace of God,” and “subvert the gospel,” and “heresies,” which are “damnable,”|| and “to which we are to give place by subjection, no, not for an hour; lest the truth of the gospel should be overthrown.”¶ On the other hand, there are errors which, while condemned as errors, we are to tolerate; and in reference to which we are “to become all things to all men.”** There is, therefore, “the faith of God’s elect,” and “the truth which is after godliness,”†† the “one faith,”‡‡ without which no man can be saved; ‘the unity of the faith,’§§ “the common salvation,”||| under which are embraced all that is fundamental to salvation, while all other truths are only necessary and im-

* Our text.

† Romans xiv. 1.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 10—12.

§ 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.

|| Gal. i. 7—9, and v. 12; 2 Pet. ii. 1.

¶ Gal. ii. 5—21.

** Rom. xiv. xv.; Col. ii. 16, 17.

†† Titus i. 1.

‡‡ Eph. iv. 5.

§§ Eph. iv. 13.

||| Jude iii. See also Heb. vi. 1.

portant as they lead to these, or to a more full and cordial acceptance of them.

The distinction between doctrines which are fundamental, and those which are not, and which is thus plainly taught in Scripture, was also, as might be shown, adopted, and acted upon by the early fathers, by the primitive churches,* and by the reformers generally,† and is fully drawn out in at least one of our Protestant Confessions.‡ “All things in Scripture,” says this Confession, “are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all, yet those things which are NECESSARY to be known, believed, and observed FOR SALVATION, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”

II. This leads me to my second point, which is to show how those doctrines which are fundamental may be distinguished. If, as has been proved, it is beyond doubt, that there are, among the truths and duties revealed in the word of God, some which are pre-eminently essential to the very essence of Christianity and of Christian hope, their existence is not to be denied because there may be difficulty in reducing them to a fixed and determinate

* See in Turretine de Fundamentalibus. Lips. 1730, p. 9, and fully in F. Spanheimi Opera, tom. iii. Lugd. 1703, p. 1059, 1306, and Waterland, vol. viii. p. 90.

† Essays on Christian Union, p. 84, and Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants; Turretine, in his work, gives a cloud of witnesses from among the reformers and post-reformers. See from p. 54, of his work above quoted, to p. 182, where the words of all these eminent men are given.

‡ See Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. i. and vii. See also § vi. and elsewhere, as in ch. ii. § 8.

number, form and order. This difficulty arises not from any want of a fixed and determinate character in the truths themselves, but from the obscure and various judgments of men's blind, prejudiced, and perverted reason, which leads them to represent the same object and the same event in very different and even opposing aspects. There is, too, a pride of opinion, a desire to be independent, and to differ from others for the mere purpose of exhibiting independence, which constitute a colouring medium through which truth is seen in false and distorted proportions. And then, too, there are a thousand things in nature and in science whose certain distinction and relative proportions we unhesitatingly admit, while it is impossible (as in the colours of the rainbow) to define and separate them by any abstract rules. That there are, for instance, fixed and necessary principles of taste, is a truth now generally admitted; and yet what insuperable difficulty is there in reducing them to a fixed and certain standard, owing to the infinitely diversified state of mental cultivation with which the same objects are contemplated. Or who will deny that right and wrong, morality and immorality, virtue and vice, are founded on immutable, unvarying, and certain principles, and yet how are these principles conformed to the ever-varying condition in which the hearts and dispositions of men are found to exist? And in like manner, truth is eternal, and unchangeable, and the relation between what is essential and what is of less intrinsic or of less relative importance, is fixed and certain, whatever difficulty there may be in making this clearly appear to the minds of men. The standard of truth is infallible and immutable, even "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," and we have

the assurance that the Spirit of truth will guide every sincere inquirer into that knowledge by which he will become "wise unto salvation," and that in doing God's will "he shall know of the doctrines whether they be of God."

We cannot determine the *amount* of certainty necessary to produce in *every* heart saving faith and assurance, and yet such an amount is really determinate. We cannot fix the amount of obedience and the number or quantity of duties which are in every case necessary to salvation, and yet what constitutes in every case sincere and holy obedience, is, in God's view, absolutely certain and will be surely awarded. The difficulty, therefore, in determining the absolute and precise quantity and objects of *faith* is no greater than what exists in the case of *duty*, and is therefore of no greater force in overthrowing the conclusion that there are certain *truths* which are fundamental and essential to salvation, than that there are certain *duties* which are thus essential. "The ablest physicians would not perhaps undertake to give us an exact catalogue or determinate number of all the essentials of human life, or of all the *fatal* distempers or *mortal* wounds incident to the animal frame: but they could easily give in a competent list of either kind; and when any particular case comes before them, they can, for the most part, judge, by the rules of their art, what means may be necessary to preserve life, and what will as naturally tend to destroy it. In like manner, though divines take not upon them to number with exactness all the verities essential to the life of Christianity, or all the errors *subversive* and *destructive* of it, yet they can specify several, in each kind, with unerring certainty, and have certain rules whereby to judge, as

occasion offers, of any other ; and this suffices in the essentials of *faith* as well as in the essentials of *practice*.”*

The fundamental character of any Christian doctrine may be determined by its relation, as a principle or motive to Christian holiness, obedience and practice, to the foundation on which the gospel of Christ rests ; and to the economy of salvation as it centres in the person, character and work of Christ, and the person, character and agency of the Holy Spirit. Fundamental doctrines are such as affect the vitals of Christianity ; such as are frequently and plainly enforced in Scripture or plainly inferable from its enforcements ; such, especially, as are presented in Scripture, when the way of salvation, and the nature, objects and grounds of faith are pointed out ; and such as will be found to lie at the foundation of the Christian experience of the great body of believers.

In these ways may every one determine and find what truths of Scripture are fundamental. God has declared that in regard to them the sincere inquirer, however ignorant, need not err. He promises also, to all such, that “wisdom which is from above,” and the infallible teaching of that ever-blessed Spirit, who is able to “guide into all truth.”

Christianity is a remedial system, adapted to the condition of a guilty and fallen race, and implies, therefore, as its very foundation, that we are sinners, and that God has, in infinite mercy, provided a Saviour. And as the very name Christian was originated by God him-

* Waterland's Works, vol. 8, p. 101, 102.

self,* and the entire burden of the Christian ministry is the “preaching of Christ,” and not of God as apart from Christ, or as in and of himself alone either able or willing to save sinners,† it is manifest that the person, character, atonement, righteousness, death and intercession of Christ, and the person, character and offices of that divine Spirit “without whom no man can call Jesus Lord,” constitute the essence, the foundation, and the very life and power of Christianity; and that fundamental truth and error must therefore be determined by their relation to these great doctrines.

To make the distinction we have established, however, of any practical importance, we must carefully distinguish between the relation of fundamental doctrines, *first*, to the system of revealed truth; *secondly*, to the church; and *thirdly*, to individual salvation; since a truth may be essential in any one of these cases and not in the others. In other words, what is essential to the scheme of salvation and to a full confession of what this scheme is, in its nature, origin, and plan, is very different from what is essential to the being of a church, and to the enjoyment of the benefits of salvation by individual inquirers.‡

* Acts ii. 26. See the original.

† Acts v. 42, xvii. 3; 1 Cor. i. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Col. i. 28, &c.

‡ The want of a perception of these distinctions lies at the basis of some of those objections which have arisen against the Evangelical Alliance, and the Speeches in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, by the Rev. James Gibson and others, (Glasgow, 1846,) in which it is laid down, that “the whole principles, (of Mr. G., as a Free Churchman,) and *nothing less*, are necessary to constitute a Christian church or a Christian man;” p. 24, and elsewhere wherever “The Claim of Rights” is included; and pp. 57, 59, 75, and 76. Now, on this principle there is, as I should

The FIRST of these distinctions (which I have not seen made in any of the discussions of this subject I have read)* appears to me of great utility and importance. Many things are essential to the conception, design and completion of the scheme of salvation, and consequently to that system of truth which imbodyes the origination as well as the actual nature and way of salvation,—which are not essential to a participation of all the benefits of that salvation as a scheme now finished and complete, and offered to our acceptance. It is one thing to ask, “How was this glorious scheme devised and perfected, and what is its comprehensive plan?” and another to ask, “What must I do to be saved?” The answer to these two questions must be altogether as different as would be the answers to the question, “How came I to exist, and how am I constituted?” and to the question, “How am I to act so as to enjoy and to perpetuate this life?” The one refers to the nature of things, and is purely abstract. The other refers to duty, and is as purely practical. The one relates to the *science*, and the other to the *way* of salvation. The one describes the origin and the method of salvation, the other tells me how this salvation may be

infer, no other Christian church but the Free Church of Scotland, and no man can be a Christian (that is be saved) out of it. Well might Dr. Buchanan glory in principles which delivered from such a spirit, and well may we all rejoice that *all* the truths essential to the *system* of truth and to the church, may be held and professed, while co-operation is maintained on the basis of those truths alone which are essential to personal salvation.

* Those I have are by Stapfer, vol. i.; Turretine, in a 4to volume devoted to the subject; Spanheim in his works, vol. iii.; Waterland's Works, vol. viii, and Stillingfleet in his Grounds of the Protestant Faith,

secured *by me*. The one unfolds the divine philosophy of salvation, and leads us back to its origin in the counsels of eternity and the covenant of grace, while the other puts us in the way and leads us forward to the full and everlasting enjoyment of it in a blessed immortality. To the former, and not to the latter, belong all those "doctrines of high mystery" which are to be "handled with special prudence and care,"* and about which there ever have been such diversities of opinion among those who must on all hands be acknowledged as humble, honest, and sincere inquirers after the true knowledge of God's word and will.†

* Confession of Faith, ch. iii. § 8.

† "The formal ground and reason of faith doth nowise lie in any particular objective destination of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, or in any particular objective intention wherewith he made and fulfilled the same. But it wholly lies in the glorious person and offices of Christ, with his satisfaction and righteousness as *freely* and *equally* set forth, by the gospel, unto all the hearers thereof; with the Lord's call and command to *each* of them to come even by faith, unto this glorious foundation."—Sacred Contemplations by Adam Gib, p. 344, 345.

If there was not a sufficiency in the atonement for the salvation of sinners without distinction, how could the ambassadors of Christ beseech them to be reconciled to God, and that from the consideration of his having been made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In short, we must either acknowledge an objective fulness in Christ's atonement, sufficient for the whole world, were the whole world to believe in him, or in opposition to Scripture and common sense, confine our invitations to believe to such persons as have believed already.

The consideration of the *efficiency* of the gospel remedy is one thing, and depends on the purpose of God, and cannot therefore be the ground of the gospel offer or of a sinner's faith; since "secret things belong unto the Lord," but the consideration of the

To the *scheme* of salvation, and a complete *system of divine truth*, these doctrines, that is, whatever is plainly revealed or can be properly inferred from the words of inspiration, however high and mysterious, must be considered as essential. Here, however, there is room given for those diversities of opinion to which, in our present state, the nature, capacity, and degree of cultivation of the human mind will inevitably lead, even when directed to the study of the Scriptures with prayerful examination and habitual docility. About these truths, therefore, there may be an honest, humble, and reverent difference of opinion. These are among the things about which even those who are "perfect" may be "otherwise minded," without bringing into question their *Christian* character, or interfering with their Christian union and co-operation in *those* things "in which they ARE agreed."

As it regards the SECOND distinction, that is, the relation in which fundamental truths stand to the church, I remark, that it must be assumed as proved, that it is the duty and privilege of every church to hold forth a profession of the truth of Christianity, since it is impossible, on this occasion, to enter upon the arguments by which it is established. The necessity for such creeds is felt and practically acknowledged by all denominations, and arises from the very nature of man, and of the present state in which he is found. But

sufficiency and adaptation of this remedy is another thing with which we have to do, and which is a ground both of the offer and the acceptance of the gospel.

See Boston on the Covenant of Grace, head iv. part ii.; Colquhoun of Covenant of Grace, p. 286; Calvin on Matthew, 26, 28; Scott on Romans, v. 15—19; Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Boston's Notes, p. 77—191, 19th ed.

whether this creed shall aim at embodying *all* the truths of God connected with the *scheme* of salvation, or only a part, must depend in the first place upon the state of the church and the prevalence of certain errors; and, secondly, upon the fact whether such a confession is designed as a bond of *ministerial* and office-bearing union, concord and profession, or only as a term of *general Christian* communion. In the first case—(as is true for instance of the Westminster Confession of Faith*)—the creed of the church may aim at giving a summary and connected view “of the whole counsel of God,” as it regards the Scriptures themselves, the origin, nature, and provisions of the scheme of salvation, and the laws of that church to whose organization it has led, and at whose foundation it is based. But in the latter case, as was true of all the ancient creeds, and as is true also of some of the church creeds now employed, the confession may only aim at a profession of such truths as are *essential to saving faith* and Christian holiness, or to the rejection of certain prevalent and dangerous errors.

Many things, also, may be essential to the constitution

* On this view of the Westminster Confession of Faith, see Dr. Janeway's Sermon on the Presbyterian Church, Introduction, and p. 32; Hill's Institutes of the Church of Scotland, p. 150, 153; Dr. Carlile, of Ireland, on the use and abuses of Creed or Confessions, p. 24, &c.; Directory for Worship, ch. 7; iv. p. 499; Bib. Repertory, p. 462 for 1840, and for October of same year; Hodge's Hist. of the Presb. Church, vol. ii. p. 271, 305, 351, 330; Dunlap's Confessions of Faith of the Ch. of Scotland, vol. i. p. cxlii, &c. cix. xxxv.; Dr. Struther's on Party Spirit in Essays on Christian Union, p. 394. See also, p. 423, 426, 427, and the Confession of Faith, p. 427, standard edition. And as to the nature of Creeds generally, see Sir Peter King's Hist. of the Apostle's Creed, and Waterland's Works, as guided by the Index to the word Creeds, &c.

of the church, viewed as a visible and an organized body, which are not essential either to a full view of the scheme or science of salvation, or to a personal enjoyment of all the benefits of salvation, since this involves the entire controversy respecting the order, polity, officers and ordinances of the church. Even, therefore, where there is agreement in all that is essential to the *scheme* and to the *attainment* of salvation, there may be great diversity as it regards what is essential to the perfect constitution of the church. The determination of what is essential doctrinally or practically, does not decide what is essential ecclesiastically. And hence a church may condemn and reject many things in the ecclesiastical order of others, and exclude them from its ministerial and ecclesiastical communion, while it gladly certifies that they hold the truth that is essential to the *system*, or to the *enjoyment* of the gospel, and rejoices to welcome them to a participation in its general Christian communion. In other words, a man may be a good theologian, and a good Christian, and yet be a very defective churchman; since other things are necessary to the organization of a church of Christ than those truths which lie at the foundation of the *scheme* of redemption, and the *enjoyment* of salvation. And hence, what is essential to the claims of any body as a true church of Jesus Christ, and to the validity of its ordinances, is not decided by the fact, that it holds *those* truths which are essential to the attainment of salvation, but also by the facts whether, in addition to these truths, it is organized on scriptural principles, and whether its ordinances are scriptural, and administered in a scriptural manner.

The **THIRD** sense in which it is important to inquire into what is fundamental, is in relation to the salvation of the

soul, or what a man must believe in order to be saved. Now, it has already been seen that the answer to this question must be very different from that given to the question, "How was the scheme of salvation originated, and what is its nature, and the entire system of truth connected with it; and what is necessary to constitute a true church?" Of the knowledge necessary to answer these latter questions a man may be in a great measure ignorant or mis-informed, and yet be possessed of all the knowledge necessary to answer the question "What must I do to be saved?" In other words, there may be a saving apprehension of Christ and his salvation, where there is great ignorance of the manner in which that salvation was devised and accomplished; just as many things are required in order to prepare nourishing food, or some healing balm, which are not necessary in order to derive, from that food, nourishment and strength, and from the medicine restoration to health. In like manner, it is only necessary for a man, in order to be saved, to know, *first*, the extent and depth of his spiritual malady; *secondly*, his own inability to remove or to heal it—that is, to justify or to purify his soul; *thirdly*, to know the character, sufficiency, almighty power, and infinite grace of "the good Physician," "Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh;" *fourthly*, to know what is the nature of that all-sufficient remedy by which He has provided for our guilty and depraved hearts, namely, his infinite righteousness to supply our want of all righteousness, and his infinite satisfaction to atone for our innumerable offences; *fifthly*, to know how we may become individual partakers of these priceless blessings, namely, by a true and living faith in Christ, as able and willing to save to the uttermost, all

that come unto him, according to the promise and the assurance of God ; and finally, to know how this faith, and that change of heart necessary for its exercise, can be wrought within us, and that is, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, by whom we are “made meet for an inheritance among the saints.” What is necessary to salvation is, in short, to know how a sinner, AS SUCH, can be justified from all sin, sanctified from all pollution, and made a partaker of everlasting life.*

Of course much less may suffice to lead a man to the Saviour, and to give him a good hope, than what will enable him to rejoice in the *assurance* of faith and hope and joy ; and while, therefore, the humble and ignorant inquirer is to be directed *at once* to a divine and all-sufficient Saviour, he is at the same time to be encouraged “to follow on to know” more perfectly the whole plan and method of our salvation, that he may be built up and established in the faith of the gospel and in the comfort of piety.† “Therefore,” are all such to be

* See Stapferi Inst. Theol. tom. v. p. 538.

† This matter may be determined in another way, namely, by determining what is the object of *saving* faith, since whatever this is, must include all that is essential to personal salvation. Now a man may believe many truths about God, the soul, and immortality, which do not affect the question of his salvation. The whole Bible too, as the testimony and word of God, is the object of faith, but not of *saving* faith, which, as Calvin remarks, “in the word, which is its general object, seeks a special object, in which it may find and receive reconciliation with God and remission of sins.” It is equally evident that the ground of *saving faith* cannot be election or particular redemption, since that which is believed must be something revealed, whereas these truths are among “the secret things which belong unto

exhorted that "leaving the PRINCIPLES of the doctrine of Christ, they go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God."*

III. From what has been said, it is evident that only those truths which are fundamental and necessary to the salvation of the soul should constitute the terms of *general* Christian communion, the basis of charity, and the bond of general Christian union and co-operation. That which unites to Christ our head makes us members of "that church invisible and holy—the house of God," "which he purchased with his own blood." And that which gives evidence that a man has been received by Christ, must be sufficient evidence to all who are Christ's, "to receive him, as Christ also hath received him, to the glory of God."† All who are united to Christ are as certainly united to one another.‡ It follows, therefore, that "the disruption of the bond which unites any one to all the rest, must be the disruption of the bond that unites him to Christ;" since the branch can only be severed from its connection with all the other branches, by being severed from the stem itself; and the limb that is separated from the other members of the body is separated from the head. To claim to be united to Christ, therefore, as a church or as an individual, and to refuse to hold Christian communion with those whom we are bound to confess Christ has received, is either wickedness, impiety, pharasaic, self-righteous pride, or preposterous folly.

God." Christ, therefore, in his person, character, sufficiency, work, and spirit, must be the object of saving faith, and the testimony of God respecting them, its ground and warrant.

* Heb. vi. 1. † Rom. xv. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 13; 1 Cor. xx. 17

In receiving them to our communion, and in communing with them, we receive them as *Christians*, but not as *church-men*; as members of the church catholic and of the church invisible, but not of any particular, visible church. Their church-membership is an index to the fact whether they do or do not hold Christ the Head, but even where their church may be defective, if they be “in the faith,” we receive *them* without any “doubtful disputations.” *Christian* communion therefore only commits us to the acknowledgment that those admitted to it, hold the truth that is necessary to salvation, and leaves our profession of what is essential *theologically* and *ecclesiastically* in all its force. “Whereto we *are* agreed, we walk by the same rule and mind the same thing.” In spite of ourselves, we are united—united whether we will or not. If we are one in Christ, we *must* be one—we cannot help it. We are under imperative obligations to receive to our communion all whom Christ has received, and to acknowledge that they are perfect as Christians, even though they may be imperfect as church-men and as theologians. “So thought, so felt, our apostle. The comprehensive prayer of his heart was—‘Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!’—His Christian affections were ‘with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours!’—‘In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature:—and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God!’” “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you, never-

theless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

"Happily," to use the words of the North British Review, on Christian Union, "this is no expedient of man's device: it is an express Divine prescription, at once in itself so reasonable, and so urgent and unquestionable in its authority, as to render it surprising that the various bodies of Christians should have so little regarded it in practice. Words cannot be plainer than those we have already quoted from the epistle to the Philippians—'Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, and mind the same things.' Whereto they have not attained, co-operation among Christians is impracticable, without a violation of conscientious persuasion, which in Christian ethics is inadmissible. While the sentiments of Christians, for example, are so diverse as they are on the forms of ecclesiastical polity, and one section regards Episcopacy, another Presbytery, a third Independency, as of Divine institution, or, at least, as accordant with the word of God, and necessary to the well-being of the Church, it is plain that conscientious conviction cannot be obeyed, unless Churches be formed on each of these models. While Christians retain these opposite convictions, they cannot walk together in these things in which they differ. And in regard to such differences, the apostolical concession to the conflicting opinions and usages of the Gentile and Jewish believers must, meanwhile, be applied, 'let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.' But must these churches repel one another, as if they had nothing in common? No more than the believing Jews were at liberty to repel the believing Gentiles, or the believing Gentiles the believing Jews.

On church polity they have not attained to the same views, and therefore thus far they cannot walk together; but in the other and higher departments of Christian truth, worship, and morals, they have attained; and are therefore bound to 'walk by the same rule and mind the same things.' By an express recognition of one another as brethren in Christ Jesus—by a free and cordial interchange of kind offices on the part of the pastors, which would tend to draw forth the fervent charity both of pastors and of their flocks, and would proclaim to the world their union in the truth—by combining in common efforts, by prayer and other fit measures, for reviving religion at home, and extending the gospel by Christian missions to unenlightened regions—and by fraternal and generous communications to the necessities of one another, their real unity would be felt and manifested, their brotherly love would grow, and the world be compelled once more to pronounce the eulogium, 'See how these Christians love one another.' We cannot see that even the present divided state of the church should prevent the enjoyment and manifestation of the primitive union, when the disciples abode 'in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'"

Truth is all-important, but all truth is not equally important. And while truth is essential to Christian character and hope, so also are charity, and peace, and union, essential to the Christian character both of individuals and of churches; and to make any thing, therefore, however true or even important it may be in itself, but which is not *essential to personal salvation*, an excuse for the failure of these things, is to "turn the truth of God into a lie," and to prove that "we know

not what spirit we are of," or as it regards God, what that meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." The apostle, therefore, charges those as bringing in another gospel, and as troublers of the churches, who made any thing more than faith in Christ essential to Christian character and communion,* and there is truth in the conclusion, if not in the criticism, of Coleridge, when he derives the term heresy (*αἵρεσις*) from a verb, which gives it the signification of lifting up some opinion, even if in its place it be true, into improper elevation, and undue importance; that is, making fundamental to salvation what may only be of minor or relative importance. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,"† and if there is one evidence of Christian faith, more than any other, made imperative and prominent, it is "love to the brethren," that is, to "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity." "Him that is in the faith," however "weak, receive ye," and that "not to doubtful disputations."

Such, I believe, to be the "wisdom which is from above," and which, as is true of it in every case, lies equally removed from those extremes of bigotry and indifference, to which the perverted mind of man is so liable. Truth is sacred. All truth is important, and no jot or tittle of it can be rejected with impunity. *Whatever* is revealed, or prescribed, or instituted by God, is "for our instruction and for our profiting," and is "to be received with thanksgiving." Even the outward order and forms of government of the church are of weighty and momentous importance, since they have a

* See Luther on Galatians, p. 39—41.

† 1 Tim. i. 5.

powerful moral influence in moulding and fashioning the experience of the believer. There is nothing, therefore, indifferent about the doctrines, order, or worship of the church; nor can any heresy be more pernicious and fatal than that which assumes to be wiser and more merciful than God, and to substitute an indifference for all opinions, for "the truth as it is in Jesus." Only those that are in this faith are "received by Christ," and can be "received by us." Only such know that "gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and we know that Christ is thus formed within every one, or else they are reprobates. All truth, therefore, is sacred and important to *the well-being* of the soul, but all truth is not equally important to be known, understood, and received *unto salvation*. There are truths, however, which are fundamental, and without the knowledge and reception of which no man can be saved. And while all truth is necessary in giving a full view of the origin, history, nature, and plan of redemption, and it is the duty or privilege at least of every church to hold forth and confess all those truths which are believed to be most necessary and important to be known and to be taught in order to the *perfection* that is in Christ Jesus, yet there are comparatively few truths which are absolutely essential to be known and received in the love of them, in order that "we may know that we are of the truth, assure our hearts before God," and enjoy the witnessing of "the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God."

These truths, then, are the terms of communion with Christ, with his church, and with all who receive and embrace them. However weak we may regard them,

as it respects the full system of truth, and the full experience of Christian hope and joy, we are to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace," to receive, acknowledge, and treat them as brethren in the Lord ; to make it manifest to the world, that amid all our diversities we are one ; that whatsoever an ungodly world may say, and whatsoever the man of sin may say, we are one ; that we can have concord without compromise, unity without uniformity, variety without variance, and co-operation without incorporation ; and that the only union ever contemplated, promised, or secured to the church on earth, is union in the truth and union in the spirit.

To realize this union, to manifest it, to make it evident to all men, to work it out in our practical demonstration of its power, and to make it as irresistible as it might be in overcoming the world and dethroning error, will-worship, man-worship, and every superstition, this we are called upon to do with all our might, "to the glory of God."* Our very differences will redound to His glory, by that concentrated power which so many separate forces, acting in combined strength, will give to the truth of God ; by the manifestation which they will give of the power of divine grace, in overcoming these forces and uniting and holding them together ; and in that life and energy which they are made to communicate to all the principles of devotion, all the springs of activity, and all the sources of Christian strength. How imperatively, therefore, are all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" as our Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh, to mind the same things, to walk

* Rom. xv. 7.

by the same rule, to co-operate in every good work, "and thus provoke one another unto love and unto good works," and thus give unity, energy, and universality to their enterprise and to their success.

I am fully of the opinion, that the principle laid down by the apostle not only warrants, but requires, the co-operation of believers with their fellow-men in the furtherance of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we are to mind these things." But I believe that it leaves Christians without excuse, if through pride or bigotry, or denominational jealousy, or a *disproportionate* regard for any truths, they erect walls of separation between them and those whom Christ has received, and by refusing to co-operate with them in the promotion of "the common salvation," they give the enemy occasion to blaspheme and triumph, and add venom to the bitter taunt of hellish men, that "Christ is divided," and that his dismembered body and self-contradicting truth give the lie to all the claims and professions of Christianity. Blessed be God, his word is gaining the ascendant over all human systems, and his truth prevailing over the vain philosophy of men. In these signs of the times we perceive the harbingers of peace. The long-separated friends of the great "Captain of salvation" are getting tired of their civil war. And amid all the smoke and thunder of the battle-field, we see preludes to a coming peace. The halcyon bow of promise spans the angry clouds; and those who have hitherto regarded each other with hostility and

jealousy are seen advancing with the olive-branch of a firm and indissoluble peace.

And now, brethren, but few words are necessary to show the bearing and design of this discourse as delivered on the present occasion, when we are assembled on the eve of the twenty-second anniversary of the American Sunday-school Union. This Society had its origin in the very views and feelings I have been describing, and were it not in existence already, we would be called upon, as by a voice from heaven, to enter with all our heart and with all zeal upon its immediate and efficient organization. Whether we consider its basis, its principles, its object, its spirit, its instrumentality, its agency, its materials, or its end, it is alike admirable, Christian, and "glorifying to God."

Its *basis* is the fundamental truth of God; not that which is essential to the full development of *the science* or *theology* of salvation; nor that which every denomination of evangelical Christians may feel it important to hold forth and profess; nor that which is essential to the organization of Christian churches; but those truths which the word of God itself makes necessary to the attainment of salvation by every one who is capable of "believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth."

Its *principle* is, that all who can cordially receive these truths, shall co-operate together without compromising any denominational principle, or excluding any denominational effort; "in minding the same thing, and in walking by the same rule."

Its *object* is, the publication of these great fundamental and saving truths in such form and manner as may bring them most surely and most powerfully before the minds

of the millions of children and youth of these United States.

Its *spirit* is love, union, charity, peace, and good will. Recognising no distinctions and knowing no denomination "according to the flesh," its language is, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" and, passing by no class of our fellow-men, and no portion of our common country, it looks with a benignant eye on all, while with prayerful emotion it exclaims, "Our heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may obtain salvation."

The *agency* it employs is the free, gratuitous, and voluntary service of those who are constrained by the love of Christ to consecrate their bodies, souls and spirits, their time and talents, to the furtherance of his cause, and the ingathering unto his fold of lost and wandering sheep.

The *instrumentality* which is put into the hands of these agents, (now amounting to more than one hundred thousand,) is the simple, unobtrusive, and inexpensive organization of a Sabbath-school, to be held on God's own day; if procurable, in God's own house; under the control of God's own church; and with no other aim than God's glory and the salvation of souls.

The *materials* upon which these agents are to expend their energy, are "the word of God," the oracles of heaven, the pure word of inspiration; the Bible, and the truths of that blessed volume, which "is able to make wise unto salvation," as presented in its own unaltered pages, and as they have been carefully digested in other well-prepared and well-approved forms of auxiliary and attractive reading.

And *the end* aimed at in all this combined agency

and effort, is that by which the apostle constrains us to such union and co-operation in effort, and that is, "the glory of God," as this will be secured in the manifestation of Christian union, the diffusion of Christian truth, the prevalence of Christian love and concord and amity, and in the practical demonstration given to an unbelieving world, that there are great and fundamental truths upon which all evangelical Christians *can* unite, by which all who believe them *can* be saved, and which *can* be made so plain and powerful, that by them God "can perfect praise even out of the mouths of babes and sucklings."

In every view, therefore, this Society commands our highest reverence, and our most hearty co-operation. It is not only commendable, wise, and expedient—it is *required* by the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, and by the positive and express teaching of apostolic wisdom, and the authority of apostolic inspiration. It is based on the distinct acknowledgment of every truth fundamental to *salvation*, and leaves every denomination to enforce, according to its own views, the whole truth which they may deem to be essential to THE SYSTEM of the gospel, and the character of the church. It recognises, as "perfect," all who receive these truths, and who rest upon them as the groundwork of a living and experimental piety. It receives all such into union with it, because they have received Christ, and Christ has received them. It affords a homestead where they may all meet, and feel that the Lord is their common dwelling-place, and that they have one Lord, one faith, one spirit, and one hope of their calling. It provides a platform on which they can all meet and give open proof that they love each other as brethren, and Christ as their

common head; a channel through which they can unite their streams of benevolence, and pour the tide of their common charity over the length and breadth of the land; a high-way of holy devotedness, where they can all "walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing;" and a treasury of scriptural and elementary instruction, which, when combined with what is more peculiarly denominational, will at once build up the heart in "the truth which is according to godliness;" and also in that truth which is adapted to mature and perfect the Christian character.

This Society labours for that class of the community which lies at the foundation of the future character and prospects of the country and the church, and which is not included in the field cultivated by any other agency. It aims at making good citizens and useful Christians, by "training up our children in the way they should go," in the assurance, that when old, "they will not depart from it." It goes before the heralds of the cross, into the wilderness and the desert moral wastes, to "prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight," and to "open up wide and effectual doors," (as it has done in many an instance of blessed efficacy,) for the ministers of the everlasting gospel. "It goes forth in the morning bearing the precious and incorruptible seed of divine truth," and sows "beside all waters," and having thus "gone forth weeping," and amid cold, and toil, and every discouragement, it leaves the appointed husbandmen to put in the sickle and reap the spiritual harvest, and to "return bearing their sheaves with them."

And what wonderful things hath God wrought by its humble and unobtrusive instrumentality? During the

twenty-two years of its existence, some thousands of schools, scattered over all the States and Territories, have been formed. Probably not less than twenty-five millions of copies of its publications have been circulated; and so pervaded are they with the essential truths of the Christian faith, that few if any of them can be shown, in which the method of a sinner's salvation is not so stated, that if the reader shall never see another book, or hear a sermon, he may know how to flee from "the wrath to come;" and in which, nevertheless, nothing is admitted that can in any way compromise or contravene those truths, which are by any deemed essential, either to the system of the truth or to the constitution of the church. Multitudes of children and teachers also have become hopefully pious, and have connected themselves with some evangelical denomination. It has led, also, by its example, to the formation of Sunday-school societies, connected with the various denominations, and to all the good accomplished through their instrumentality. And it has led, in various ways and divers manners, to results bearing on the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the welfare of society, which can only be estimated by that omniscience which can trace up all effects to their ultimate causes, and only be fully appreciated when we shall behold their glorious issue in the blessedness of eternity!

Let the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION then be dearer than ever to the hearts of Christians. Its "field is yet white to the harvest," and still enlarging in its illimitable extent. Its race is not run, nor its course finished. They are, in fact, only commenced. It has but acquired the experience, the skill, and the instrumentality, through which it may come up with accumulating force,

“to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” God, by his ever-blessed Spirit, is even now drawing together the hearts of his children, and inspiring them with thoughts of love, peace, union, and co-operation, against their *common* enemies, and in defence of their *common* principles. And in this Society, and the Bible and the Tract societies—the three moral wonders of the age—God has provided centres where these rays of love may all converge: fountains into which the waters of mercy may all flow, again to emerge in streams of salvation; and rallying points around which all the soldiers of the cross may gather, where they may concert their plans, and concentrate their powers, in order the more successfully to pour themselves upon the united hosts of idolatry, infidelity and error.

May He whose cause it is, and according to whose wisdom this Society is formed, pour out upon it more abundant success, and draw towards it, with ever increasing ardour, the zeal, the affection, and the co-operation of all who receive his truth in the love of it; and to his name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be all the praise. Amen.

THE END.

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